

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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RELEASE
DATE: May 25, 2018

CAL FIRE Investigators Determine Cause of Four Wildfires in Butte and Nevada Counties

Sacramento – After extensive and thorough investigations, CAL FIRE investigators have determined that four Northern California wildfires in last year's October Fire Siege were caused by trees coming into contact with power lines. The four fires, located in Butte and Nevada counties, are the first fire investigations from last October to be completed.

CAL FIRE investigators were dispatched to the fires last year and immediately began working to determine their origin and cause. The Department continues to investigate the remaining 2017 fires, both in October and December, and will release additional reports as they are completed.

The October 2017 Fire Siege involved more than 170 fires and charred more than 245,000 acres in Northern California. More than 11,000 firefighters from 17 states helped battle the blazes.

Below is a summary of the four completed investigations:

- The La Porte Fire, in Butte County, started in the early morning hours of Oct. 9 and burned a total of 8,417 acres, destroying 74 structures. There were no injuries to civilians or firefighters. CAL FIRE has determined the fire was caused by tree branches falling onto PG&E power lines. CAL FIRE investigators determined there were no violations of state law related to the cause of this fire.
- The McCourtney Fire, in Nevada County, started the evening of Oct. 8 and burned a total of 76 acres, destroying 13 structures. There were no injuries to civilians or firefighters. CAL FIRE has determined the fire was caused by a tree falling onto PG&E power lines. The investigation found evidence that PG&E allegedly failed to remove a tree from the proximity of a power line, in violation of the state Public Resources Code section 4293.
- The Lobo Fire, in Nevada County, started the evening of Oct. 8 and burned a total of 821 acres, destroying 47 structures. There were no injuries to civilians or firefighters. CAL FIRE has determined the fire was caused by a tree contacting PG&E power lines. The investigation found evidence that Public Resources Code section 4293, which requires adequate clearance between trees and power lines, was allegedly violated.

- The Honey Fire, in Butte County, started in the early morning hours of Oct. 9 and burned a total of 76 acres. There were no injuries to civilians or firefighters and no structures were destroyed. CAL FIRE has determined the fire was caused by an Oak branch contacting PG&E power lines. The investigation found evidence that Public Resources Code 4293, which requires adequate clearance between trees and power lines, was allegedly violated.

The McCourtney, Lobo, Honey investigations have been referred to the appropriate county District Attorney's offices for review.

Californians are encouraged to remain vigilant and prepared for wildfire. For more information, visit www.readyforwildfire.org or www.fire.ca.gov

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